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NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

PROVISION OF FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Activities of the secretariat to facilitate the provision of financial and technical support for the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention and information on those communications

Note by the secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The activities of the secretariat to facilitate the provision of financial and technical support to Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) for the preparation of national communications are mandated by Article 8, paragraph 2 (c), of the Convention and various decisions by the Conference of the Parties (COP).[1]

2. Decision 10/CP.2, in particular, requests the secretariat "to facilitate assistance to Parties, particularly developing country Parties, in the preparation of their initial communications, through the organization of workshops at the regional level; to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences in the development of emission factors and activity data for the estimation of the inventory, as well as, on request, for other elements of information in the initial communication; and to provide a report to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice at each of their sessions."

[1] See decisions 10/CP.2, 12/CP.4, 8/CP.5, 30/CP.7, 31/CP.7 and 32/CP.7. The full texts of these decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its second, fourth, fifth and seventh sessions are contained in documents FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1, FCCC/CP/1998/16/Add.1, FCCC/CP/1999/6/Add.1 and FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.4, respectively.

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B. Scope

3. This document reports on the activities undertaken by the secretariat since its last report submitted to the fifteenth sessions of the subsidiary bodies (FCCC/SBI/2001/INF.8). Section II describes the activities of the secretariat to facilitate the provision of financial and technical support to non-Annex I Parties in the preparation of national communications. These activities include support to the work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE), participation in meetings and workshops other than those of the CGE, preparing the fourth compilation and synthesis of initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties, drafting revised guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties, and support to the National Communications Support Programme and other activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Section III provides an overview of the status of preparation of national communications by non-Annex I Parties.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

A. Support to the Consultative Group of Experts

4. The COP, by its decision 8/CP.5, established the CGE with the objective of improving the national communications of non-Annex I Parties. The UNFCCC secretariat has continued to facilitate the work of the CGE in discharging its mandate.

5. The COP, by its decision 31/CP.7, extended the term of the CGE until its eighth session and also provided the CGE with two additional mandates: to identify and assess technical problems and constraints that have affected the preparation of initial national communications by those non-Annex I Parties that have yet to complete them, and to make recommendations for consideration by the subsidiary bodies; and to provide input to the draft improved guidelines for the preparation of national communications of non-Annex I Parties.

6. Decision 31/CP.7 also mandated the CGE to conduct two workshops in 2002 with the objective of sharing experience in order to ensure adequate coverage of the matters described above. The first workshop took place in Bonn, Germany, from 10 to 12 April 2002. The report of the workshop, contained in document FCCC/SBI/2002/INF.3, was submitted for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its sixteenth session. The second workshop took place in Nassau, Bahamas, from 8 to 10 August 2002. The report of this workshop is contained in document FCCC/SBI/2002/INF.10, and will be considered at SBI 17.

7. The fifth meeting of the CGE took place from 30 to 31 May 2002 in Bonn, Germany. An oral report on the meeting was presented by the CGE Chair at SBI 16. The SBI took note of the report and invited Parties to submit their views on a possible new mandate and terms of reference of the CGE. It also requested the secretariat to compile these submissions in a miscellaneous document for consideration by the SBI at its seventeenth session, with a view to a decision being adopted by the COP at its eighth session The views from Parties are contained in document FCCC/SBI/2002/MISC.6.

8. On the basis of the outputs of the two workshops as well as the fifth meeting of the CGE and recommendations contained in its report to the SBI at its fifteenth session (FCCC/SBI/2001/15), the CGE prepared its report for the consideration of the SBI at its seventeenth session (FCCC/SBI/2002/15).

9. The secretariat has supported the CGE in the fulfilment of its tasks as indicated in paragraphs 6 to 8 above by, inter alia, organizing all CGE meetings and workshops, preparing technical background documents, drafting CGE reports, and maintaining the electronic listserv that allowed CGE members to communicate efficiently.

B. Participation in meetings and workshops other than those of the CGE

10. Since the preparation of the report on the activities undertaken by the secretariat to facilitate assistance to Parties (FCCC/SBI/2001/INF.8), presented to the fifteenth sessions of the subsidiary bodies, the secretariat has participated in and made contributions to five meetings and workshops other than those of the CGE.

11. The first meeting was the workshop on best practices in policies and measures among Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties). The workshop was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 8 to 10 October 2001, with the financial support of the Governments of Denmark and Norway. It was organized by the UNFCCC secretariat in close cooperation with the Danish Energy Agency and the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment. The report of the workshop is included in document FCCC/SBSTA/2001/INF.5.

12. The workshop addressed a number of topics that were also relevant for non-Annex I Parties, including cross-cutting issues in policy design and implementation, national programmes and evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and measures, policy instruments, measures relating to emissions from industry and end-use equipment, and measures relating to emissions from transport. The workshop also considered "best practices" in policies and measures in countries with economies in transition (EIT) and the issue of minimizing adverse effects on developing country Parties of policies undertaken by Annex I Parties. Presentations and discussions held at the workshop suggested that, although policies were broadly similar across countries, the details of implementation differed significantly due to different national circumstances.

13. The second meeting was the workshop on local perspectives on climate variability held in Apia, Samoa, from 3 to 6 December 2001. It was organized by the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. The workshop brought together 45 people with backgrounds in climate change science in the Pacific Islands, disaster management, social science research on environment and development issues in the Pacific, and public policy.

14. A total of 28 presentations were made by the participants on a number of issues, including local/community, national and international responses to climate change and variability. The secretariat made two presentations, one on the UNFCCC perspectives on adaptation to climate change and a second one on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Third Assessment Report.

15. The third meeting was a workshop of the GEF-funded project "Assessment of Impacts and Adaptation to Climate Change in Multiple Regions and Sectors (AIACC)", which was held at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, from 11 to 15 February 2002.

16. The main objectives of the meeting included the launching of the individual AIACC projects, discussing the objectives of AIACC and the individual projects, assisting project teams in project design, providing feedback on training courses and encouraging inter-project networks and sharing of skills.

17. More than 50 participants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean participated in the meeting. The UNFCCC secretariat made a presentation on the links between the national communication process of the UNFCCC and AIACC. The presentation focused on ways in which the AIACC project could contribute to the national communication process.

18. The fourth meeting was the workshop on "Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change", which was held in Casablanca, Morocco, from 23 to 24 April 2002. It was organized and hosted by the Department of Environment at the School of Public Works, Casablanca.

19. The main objectives of the workshop were to exchange experiences in conducting vulnerability and adaptation assessments across various sectors of the economy and to provide input to the preparation of a project proposal on vulnerability and adaptation for the Maghreb region.

20. More than 40 experts representing various Moroccan government agencies, universities and research institutes participated in this workshop. The secretariat made a presentation on problems relating to vulnerability and adaptation assessments in developing countries, decisions taken at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (the Marrakesh Accords) and funding opportunities.

21. The secretariat also participated in the International Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness, held in the Hague, the Netherlands, from 26 to 28 June 2002. The conference was co-sponsored by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Prevention Consortium and Disaster Management Facility of the World Bank, the Dialogue on Water and Climate and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and was hosted by the Netherlands Red Cross. The conference brought together, probably for the first time, climate and climate change scientists, disaster managers, practitioners, policy makers and non-governmental organizations who are involved in disaster relief and management at the grass-roots level to discuss issues pertaining to the impacts, policy and practice of climate change and disaster preparedness.

22. The conference was opened with the launching of a World Disaster Report which concluded that there were many more people at risk than ever before and that the resources allocated to support millions of people at risk were low and diminishing. Many anecdotes and testimonies were presented at the conference in support of this conclusion. Another highlight of the conference was the official opening/launch of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre which is to be hosted by the Netherlands Red Cross and will focus on, among other things, supporting the improvement of national societies' disaster preparedness to help them cope with the impacts of climate change, and matching scientific expertise in disaster preparedness and in climate change to enable rapid action to assist people at risk.

C. Fourth compilation and synthesis of initial national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

23. By its decision 30/CP.7, the COP requested the secretariat to prepare the fourth compilation and synthesis of initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties, based on submissions received between 1 June 2001 and 1 June 2002, and to make that report available to the subsidiary bodies for consideration by the COP at its eighth session.

24. In the compilation and synthesis of the 31 new initial national communications submitted in the above-mentioned period (FCCC/SBI/2002/16), the secretariat reported on issues, constraints and problems encountered in using the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of initial national communications by non-Annex I Parties, and on other issues raised by these Parties. It also prepared an executive summary covering the information contained in all 83 initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties that had been submitted since the entry into force of the Convention (FCCC/SBI/2002/8).

D. Revision of the guidelines for the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

25. The COP, by its decision 32/CP.7, decided to continue the process of reviewing the guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties in accordance with decision 8/CP.5, with a view to improving these guidelines at its eighth session. The improvement of the guidelines shall take into account, inter alia, information contained in the third compilation and synthesis report (FCCC/SBI/2001/14) and information contained in national communications submitted as at 31 December 2001, as well as the recommendations of the CGE.

26. The draft guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties were prepared by the secretariat in accordance with decision 32/CP.7, and were presented as a Chairman's text for consideration by the SBI at its sixteenth session (annex I to FCCC/SBI/2002/INF.2). The SBI took note of the views expressed by Parties on the need to further consider the SBI Chairman's text and recalled decision 32/CP.7 requesting the submission of views from Parties on the proposed guidelines, with a view to improving them at COP 8. Decision 32/CP.7 also requested the secretariat to prepare an information document containing these views of Parties for consideration by the subsidiary bodies at their seventeenth sessions. The proposed improved guidelines are contained in document FCCC/SBI/2002/INF.8 and information on the views from Parties is contained in document FCCC/SBI/2002/INF.9.

E. Support to the National Communications Support Programme and other GEF activities

27. The UNFCCC secretariat provided support to the National Communications Support Programme (NCSP), including chairing its Advisory Committee. The NCSP was created as an initiative of the GEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP to enhance the capacity of non-Annex I Parties. The NCSP promoted the quality, comprehensiveness and timeliness of initial national communications. In 2001 and 2002, the level of support to countries provided by the NCSP was limited to technical feedback on initial national communications, responses to hotline queries, and maintenance of an electronic listserv and web site.

28. The programme has now become the National Communications Support Unit (NCSU) at UNDP. The NCSU is a UNDP initiative devoted to providing technical support to countries with climate change enabling activities. As a result of this transition, the Advisory Committee of the NCSP has ceased to exist.

29. On request the secretariat has continued to provide comments and advice on relevant activities of the GEF and its implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank), including those carried out by the NCSU. The secretariat provided comments on all GEF enabling activity project proposals submitted for funding by non-Annex I Parties. The project activities included those which relate to the preparation of initial and second national communications as well as phase II enabling activities (so-called top-up projects). The project proposals are designed to strengthen national climate change teams to implement the Convention both at the national and at the regional levels. The secretariat also provided comments on various GEF regional or global project proposals, including those on capacity-building for improving the quality of GHG inventories, mainstreaming adaptation, capacity-building for observing systems, capacity-building for stage II adaptation, and assessments of impacts and adaptations.

III. STATUS OF PREPARATION OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

30. The information presented below is based on responses from non-Annex I Parties to a questionnaire distributed by the secretariat and on information provided by the GEF and its implementing agencies.

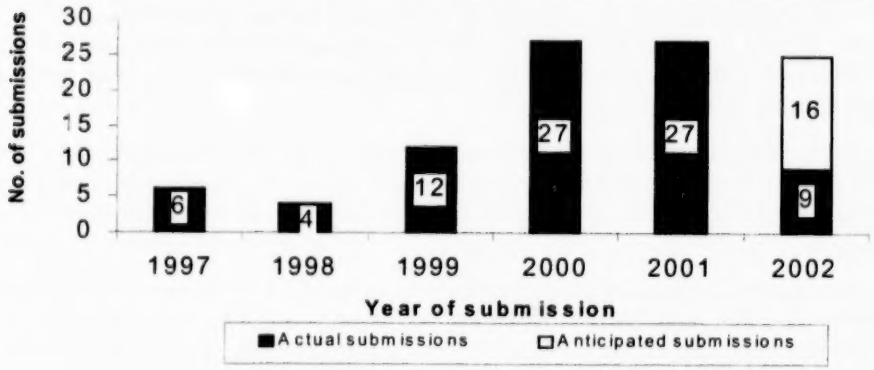
31. A summary of the status of preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties can be found in document FCCC/WEB/2002/9, posted on the secretariat web site (http://www.unfccc.int/program/nai/ncweb0209.pdf). The information is regularly updated and is made available to Parties in hard copy on request.

32. The secretariat also compiled a list of projects submitted by non-Annex I Parties in accordance with Article 12, paragraph 4, of the Convention (FCCC/WEB/2002/8) and posted it on its web site (http://unfccc.int/program/nai/ncweb0208.pdf). This information is also regularly updated and is made available to Parties in hard copy on request.

A. Initial national communications

33. As at 29 August 2002, 85 initial national communications have been submitted to the secretariat (in the following chronological order): Jordan, Argentina, Uruguay, Senegal, Micronesia, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Zimbabwe, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Egypt, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Lebanon, Chile, El Salvador, Lesotho, Philippines, Azerbaijan, Singapore, Malaysia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Bhutan, Cape Verde, Mali, Niger, Republic of Moldova, Thailand, Ecuador, Honduras, Seychelles, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Israel, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Marshall Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Algeria, Ghana, Panama, Nicaragua, Peru, Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Niue, Ethiopia, Botswana, Tunisia, Chad, Yemen, Barbados, Congo, Mongolia, Morocco, Bahamas, Maldives, Burundi, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Colombia, Togo, Haiti, Guatemala, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Burkina Faso, Guyana, Swaziland, Djibouti and Mauritania (see figure for submissions developments).

Figure. Submissions of initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties by year



34. Nine non-Annex I Parties have submitted their initial national communications in 2002 and another 16 have indicated their intention to submit them by the end of 2002. This would bring the total number of submissions to 101 from a total of 146 non-Annex Parties (58 per cent).

35. The geographical spread of submissions is uneven. Whereas 85 per cent out Parties in the Latin America and Caribbean region have submitted their initial national communications, submissions from other regions are 54 per cent for Asia and the Pacific, 49 per cent for Africa and 40 per cent for Europe. Forty three per cent of the least developed country Parties have submitted their initial national communications.

36. Argentina, Micronesia and Uruguay have submitted addenda to their initial national communications. Argentina submitted an addendum covering inventory data for 1990, 1994 and 1997. Uruguay submitted two addenda covering inventory data for 1994 and 1998 as well as comparative studies of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for 1990, 1994 and 1998. Micronesia submitted an addendum which provides additional information on all elements of its national communication.

37. Currently, no information is available relating to the preparation of the initial national communications of Angola, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea and San Marino. All other non-Annex I Parties that have not yet submitted their initial national communications are presently engaged in preparing them.

B. Enabling activities phase II (expedited financing for (interim) measures for capacity-building in priority areas)

38. Pursuant to decision 2/CP.4, the GEF provided funding for 53 projects (including a regional one with 10 participating countries) under its expedited procedure for the implementation of specific capacity-building activities by non-Annex I Parties within the framework of phase II enabling activities. The projects are designed to strengthen activities initiated during the preparation of their initial national communications and may lead to project proposals for the second national communications. The approved budget for each national project varies from US$ 48,000 to 118,000.

39. Sixty-two Parties are currently undertaking various national or regional projects in six areas: (i) the assessment of technology needs, identification of sources and suppliers of these technologies, and the determination of modalities for the acquisition and absorption of those technologies; (ii) the improvement of national activities for public awareness and education on climate change; (iii) effective participation in systematic observation networks; (iv) facilitation of national and/or regional access to the information provided by international centres and networks, and working with those centres for the dissemination of information, information services, and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and know-how; (v) the design, formulation, management, implementation and evaluation of projects which would help Parties to fulfil their commitments under the Convention; and (vi) studies leading to the preparation of national programmes to address climate change, including the improvement of local emission factors.

40. Two Parties (Indonesia and Georgia) have already submitted their project reports to the secretariat. They are entitled "Identification of less greenhouse gases emission technologies in Indonesia" and "Capacity building to assess technology needs, modalities to acquire and absorb them, evaluate and host projects" (Georgia). Six Parties have submitted project proposals for funding of phase II enabling activities but have not yet received approval from the GEF.

C. Status of preparation of second national communications

41. Pursuant to decision 8/CP.5, all Parties that submitted their initial national communications before the adoption of the revised guidelines for national communications and wished to start the preparation of their second national communications before the seventh session of the COP, could do so using the initial guidelines. The decision further requests the GEF to provide funding for the preparation of the second national communications of those Parties following the guidance given to it in decisions 11/CP.2 and 2/CP.4. The COP at its seventh session confirmed in its decision 32/CP.7 that non-Annex I Parties wishing to start the preparation of their subsequent national communications may do so using the initial guidelines as set out in decisions 10/CP.2 and 2/CP.4, pending the adoption by the COP of improved guidelines for the preparation of national communications.

42. Uruguay received funds from the GEF for the preparation of its second national communication in the year 2000 and the GEF has recently approved Argentina's enabling activities project for the preparation of its second national communication. Costa Rica has submitted a project proposal to the GEF. Eight other Parties have expressed their intention to seek funds from the GEF for the commencement of work towards the preparation of their second national communications.

43. Mexico has already submitted its second national communication.